

John Randolph to Andrew Jackson, December 19, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN RANDOLPH TO JACKSON.1

1 Copy. A. J. Donelson's handwriting.

Roanoke, December 19, 1831.

strictly confidential

My dear Sir, I am confined to my apartment living on asses milk and Sarsaparilla with small hopes of ever leaving it except feet foremost.

I have been trying to write to you. A letter from Hamilton of So. Carolina charges you with osillating on the great and vital question of the Bank of the U S. I repelled the charge with indignation. But the report thickens from all quarters. I get it from Richmond thro' our friend Mr. Tho. Miller of Powhattan, as the common talk and belief there. I receive it this instant in a letter from one of the most virtuous and discreet of men, a member of the Virginia delegation in Congress. It is even said to be squinted at in your message which I have not read and I have no body to read it to me, being like Darius,

“Deserted in my utmost need By those my former bounty fed”

I am literally alone, eating and sleeping in the same room which I never quit, keeping up fires day and night, and the room never under 45.50 of Farhenheit at day break, or I suffocate.

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In my speeches to the people I have bottomed my support of you upon our identity of opinion on the Bank question. I said that in comparison with this, the Tariff, the Internal improvement and surplus distribution questions, in which I differed from you, were merged and that I verily believed that if you had not with fearless integrity come out and stirred that nest of hornets you would not have lost a vote more than you had at the last election. I added "that this made up for all our differences on political subjects, *for that if you were a friend to the chesnut street monster as you were its bitter enemy, it would be impossible for me ever to support you* , cordially.

I therefore stand committed, but I am a thing of nothing, not so your fame, which is part of the property (and the most precious part) of our country. I cannot and will not believe it possible that you can waver upon this subject until proof not to be resisted is brought to my senses. But I deem it my duty to tell you as a friend that you are surrounded with evil counsellors. I say evil because one is ultra Federal, ultra Tariff, ultra Bank, as an old sedition law federalist might be expected to be. Another to say nothing of other matters, is a republican convert to the Tariff, Internal improvement and Bank questions: of itself enough to damn him politically with all *real* republicans. I am not blaming the first of these Gentlemen for his principles, he is right to follow his vocation. But if (which may God in his mercy avert) he or any body else shall cause you to hesitate even, on this question there is an end of your reputation. The laurels of the 27th Decr. and the 8th of January will have been blighted, your real friends will hang their heads and blush. they will indeed *vote* for you, at least I will against Clay and the grand *Nullifier* and Webster and John Adams (the best of the set), but the vote will be exbtorted from them. I shall be delivered of mine with forceps. This is plain language, but it is that of a friend ready to pour out his blood for you: of one who wants nothing, but who is turning all his property into money as fast as he can, that he may escape next year, if he shall survive, from a climate worse even than that of Russia. A climate where we have a Greenland winter and an African summer in latitude 37° north, the latitude of Algiers! Mr. Taney and Mr. Woodbury I have confidence in. Mr. Cass I have not the pleasure to know; but all your real Virginia friends agree that

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the present cabinet is more objectionable than the last. Then we hadbb the head of it with us as far as a New Yorker dared to go—now—but I drop my pen.